



Educating, Engaging and Mobilizing Parents to Take Action on  
Issues that Matter Most To Them...

Testimony before Appropriations Committee

**H.B. 6824 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium ending June thirtieth 2017, and  
Making Appropriations therefore and other Provisions Related to Revenue**

Testimony by Marilyn Calderón, Executive Director  
Connecticut Parent Power  
Friday, February 27, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding:

**H.B. 6824 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium ending June thirtieth 2017, and  
Making Appropriations therefore and other Provisions Related to Revenue**

I am Marilyn Calderón, Executive Director of Connecticut Parent Power a statewide parent-led organization that engages, educates and mobilizes diverse parents from across the state to act on issues that matter most to them improving outcomes for all children in areas of early childhood, care, education, health care reform and K-12 school systems.

Connecticut Parent Power works hand in hand with five collaborative statewide partners that include, but are not limited to, the Connecticut Association of Human Services, Connecticut Voices for Children, the Early Childhood Alliance and All Our Kin whom all believe that we can accomplish solution based outcomes when we collectively work together to ensure that no elimination of parent, child and family programs and services are harmed.

Connecticut Parent Power would like to take a moment to commend the legislature for their shared vision in passing legislative laws that promote the wellness of all children and their families to be able to access quality care and educational services that truly promote preventative benchmarks to ensure that all families succeed. For the past four years, Connecticut Parent Power, alongside statewide partners and most importantly parents have worked together to produce a plan for early childhood that would continue to cultivate a system that works for all children and families to fully establish the Office of Early Childhood.

As you know, the establishment of the Office of Early Childhood was only the first step to streamlining costs and the first stage to building a one point of entry for our parents to best



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navigate a system that has been quite confusing for years to access. Therefore, we believe that HB 6824 needs to focus on restoring all the funding of preventive investments that we, as a state have made to date, with children and the responsible adults in their lives to ensure that we continue to offer the quality training and support services for parents and relative caregivers they deserve in areas of:

- Help Me Grow
- Parent's Trust Fund (i.e., Parent University, PLTI, Parent SEE, Fatherhood Initiative, etc.)
- Community Plans for Early Childhood
- Early Literacy Grant
- School Age programming at State Funded Centers
- Early Childhood Advisory Cabinet
- ABCD's Arts Enrichment Program

As you know, the parent/child educational programs and services in the aforementioned have provided distinct and proactive linkages that have demonstrated exemplary outcomes regarding the return on investment for the whole family construct in areas of:

1. Parent Leadership Development
2. Parent Voices in Solution Based Action
3. Understanding How To Navigate Systems
4. Understanding What is Happening in Your Child's Brain Development

Our state cannot afford to go backwards, we need to continue making our children and their responsible adults a priority to foster the hopes and dreams that every parent has for their child: "a safe, loving, nurturing, healthy, affordable/accessible, physical, social and emotionally balanced home, school and community quality experience to cultivate life long productive citizens that give back to the greater good of their community."

We know that having a systematic change for fostering the quality of life for all requires funding and time, however, we cannot continue to compromise the integrity of the exemplary work we have fostered on the backs of our most vulnerable, low income & affluent parents, children and their families, whom significantly benefit from diversified instructional trainings, supports, workshops such as the Fatherhood Initiative, Parent Leadership Institute, Parents Seeking Educational Excellence, Parent University and other programs/services that have continued to be an essential element regarding the return on



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investment (ROI) of exemplary volunteer work and community planned projects that have cultivated a better end result for all!

I know you, the Appropriations Committee all care about the wellness of our most vulnerable children and parents by already building an Office of Early Childhood that embraces the ever changing two- and even three generational household in which our children live in to promote the holistic success of the whole child and whole family more intensely and intentionally. Therefore, as you are making decisions of eliminating programs/services...think about the thousands of parents, children and families who have continued to give more in their local communities and have become ambassadors in our state advocating and creating cost effective ways in which we can all win when we finalize what we began constructing with a unified approach with a systems-build approach that never takes financial short cuts, but truly invested in preventive measures that in the long run will be significant on our return on investment, not only locally, but statewide.

In closing, our CT Parent Power families and statewide partners look forward to your continued support on "Standing Together" regarding restoring all funding for our Parent Trust Fund that truly enables our parents the opportunities to gain knowledge that they in turn share and model in the greater good of applying those skills in their local and statewide infrastructure for all children to grow healthy, safe, socially, emotionally and physically sound!

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you and please don't hesitate to reach out to CT Parent Power for any additional support and solution-based guidance...